

**Rainbow Lorikeets at Safety Bay.**—On February 4, 1978 I heard the loud, excited chatter of lorikeets coming from a group of Norfolk Island Pines, Peppermints (*Agonis flexuosa*) and eucalypts about 300 m from the jetty opposite Penguin Island at Safety Bay. Moments later I saw two birds burst from the group of trees, and still calling, fly swiftly north. The sun momentarily caught the reddish breast of one bird, confirming my first impression that they were Rainbow Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*).

I was in the vicinity from February 4-13 and heard the lorikeets calling in the distance twice more (on the 9th and 12th). On the latter occasion I managed to get close to the tree they were in (a flowering Tuart, *Eucalyptus gomphocephala*), but the four birds flew off before I could establish which race of Rainbow Lorikeet they belonged to. I presume they are part of the population of eastern Australian Rainbow Lorikeets (*T. haematodus moluccanus*), first recorded in Western Australia by Storr in March 1968 (see *W.A. Nat.*, 12: 116). All but one of the sightings he reported (Goosberry Hill), were from well established inner suburbs of Perth.

—L. A. SMITH, Western Australian Museum, Perth.

**Tropical Seeds Washed up on Western Australian Beaches.**—Occasionally the seeds and fruits of tropical plants are found washed up on beaches in South-Western Australia (K. F. Kenneally, Tropical seeds and fruits washed up on the South-West coast of Western Australia, *W.A. Naturalist*, 12, 1972: 73-80). The usual theories for their arrival here involve drifting many hundreds of miles on ocean currents although it is acknowledged that Man may play a hand in their transportation. My own interest in the matter was stimulated by the finding of a seed of *Caesalpinia bonduc* on the shores of Penguin Island (Excursions: Penguin Island, Safety Bay, *W.A. Naturalist*, 12; 1973: 117-120).

In Ghana this seed is used to play a very popular game called 'oware'—in fact its Twi name is "oware-aba"—which involves the movement of some 50 seeds as 'counters' along a double row of depressions in the 'oware board'. It is very fast and rather mathematical—the nearest European equivalent would probably be backgammon.

Ghanaians also use the fruits of the oil palm, *Elaeis guineensis*, as counters and a few other species whose names I cannot now recall.

I have seen the game being played from the Ivory Coast to the Cameroun—in Nigeria it is called 'dara'—so that one may assume it to be common throughout West Africa.

I was surprised, however, to see these same 'oware boards' for sale in Djakarta. Small pebbles were being used as counters, but unfortunately time did not permit a further investigation of the possible use of seeds. An enquiry to the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra produced the information that the game is common in Java, Sumatra and North Sulawesi where it is known as 'dakon', 'congklak' and 'kuwung' respectively.

The seeds of asam, *Tamarindus indica*, and fruits of sawo, *Manilkara kauki*, are used as counters—but the Embassy did not mention *Caesalpinia*.

I suppose it is possible that ships may come here from West Africa, bearing their complement of oware-playing seamen. However, Indonesian ships certainly do visit our coasts and the sailors may well have an oware-board and counters. Perhaps the loss of some of these seeds may account for a few of the beach-washed specimens found on our shores?

My thanks go to M. A. Noerbambang, Cultural Attache, Embassy of Indonesia, and to Dr P. Wyherley, Kings Park Board, who supplied a scientific name for 'sawo'.

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**The elapid snakes *Denisonia pallidiceps* and *Denisonia suta* in the Kimberleys of Western Australia.**—Among the additions to the 1957 edition of Glauert's *A Handbook to the Snakes of Western Australia* was a description of *Denisonia suta* based on a specimen from Kimberley Research Station near Kununurra.

In 1960 at the Western Australian Museum, Glauert received a specimen of *Denisonia pallidiceps* collected at the same research station by Dr. K. Immelmann.

Since then the Western Australian Museum has accessed specimens of *D. pallidiceps* from Mitchell Plateau (14° 53' S, 125° 49' E) and King Edward River, and specimens of *D. suta* from Kimberley Research Station (Kununurra), Lake Argyle and west of Rosewood Station.

*Denisonia suta* can be distinguished from other Kimberley elapids by its 19 rows of dorsal scales at midbody.

*Denisonia pallidiceps* is distinguished from *Denisonia punctata* (the other small elapid in the Kimberleys with 15 rows of dorsals at midbody and undivided subcaudals) by its dark unspotted head and sharp demarcation between dorsal and ventral colouration.

Other details are as follows:

*Denisonia pallidiceps* (3 specimens)—Ventrals: 163-176 (mean 172.6). Subcaudals: 35-46 (mean 40). Ventrals plus subcaudals 209-215 (mean 212). Snout-vent length (mm): 382-480 (mean 426). Tail as percent of SVL: 13.7-26.5 (mean 18.9).

Dorsum entirely slaty grey or reddish brown. Undersurface immaculate white except for a row of dark longitudinal spots on posterior ventrals and all subcaudals. Scales on lower flanks variably marked white (some scales entirely white) making the demarcation between the dark back and pale belly irregular. Upper labials pale, grading into the darker colour of the rest of the head.

*Denisonia suta* (13 specimens)—Ventrals: 161-181 (n 12, mean 175.9). Subcaudals: 30-38 (n 12, mean 31.4). Ventrals plus subcaudals: 196-218 (n 12, mean 210.2). Snout-vent length (mm): 194-550 (n 10, mean 374). Tail as percent SVL: 11.6-15.4 (n 10 mean 13.9).

Back a uniform glossy greyish brown. Head with a darker crown (not easily seen in dark adults). Upper labials and rostral blotched white thus forming an irregular white line from gape to gape. Sometimes a broken white line from nostril through eye to temporals. Chin and margins of lower labials usually smudged grey. Ventrals dark edged. Subcaudals on adults with a dark median smudge. Young specimens reddish with a dark base to each scale.

—L. A. SMITH, Western Australian Museum, Perth.

**The Port Lincoln Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius zonarius*) feeding on Lerps at Kalgoorlie.**—Whilst collecting Port Lincoln Parrots (*Barnardius zonarius zonarius*) in June 1977 at a site 50 km north of Kalgoorlie I observed several of these birds peeling strips of bark from branches of *Eucalyptus campaspe* and feeding on some object concealed beneath these strips. On closer examination up to three to four scale insects were found on sections of branches from which the bark had been removed. These insects were identified (with the assistance of David Morgan, University of Adelaide, Department of Entomology) as either *Glycaspis* sp. or *Cometopsylla* sp.

Both these genera produce characteristic white, sticky secretions called lerps which consist predominantly of carbohydrate material (CSIRO, *Insects of Australia*, 1970, p. 133). Surrounding the lerp was a viscous honey-like liquid which presumably exuded from the plant phloem via openings created by the scale insects.

The parrots fed in the following manner: a strip of bark was removed initially with the beak and held with one foot (if necessary) while the bird licked the area covered by both lerp and plant sap. Since part of my work also involved obtaining crop samples from shot specimens for analysis of feeding habits, I examined these for the presence of scale insects and, in one bird's crop, observed three.

Although Froggatt (*Forest Insects of Australia*, 1923) stated that several species of brush-tongued parrakeets fed upon leaf scale insects in Victoria, no report of Port Lincoln parrots feeding on either scale insects, their lerps, or *Eucalyptus* phloem material has been published. It is common knowledge, however, that the closely related Twentycight